

Mr. Speaker, as the Congressman with the privilege to represent Estacada, Oregon--the Christmas Tree Capital of the World--I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Christmas trees are a large part of Oregon's nursery and tree industry. In fact, Oregon leads the Nation in Christmas tree production, with 6.9 million trees sold last year at a value of nearly \$108 million to the Oregon economy. In particular, Clackamas County--which I am proud to represent along with Ms. HOOLEY--is the largest producing county in the country with \$36.8 million in sales from 17,500 acres of Christmas trees. Across our state, there are almost 1,600 Christmas tree operations, encompassing an area over one and half times the size of Washington, DC and employing close to 10,000 people at total wages of over \$32 million.

Oregon farmers began hauling Christmas trees for out-of-state sales by horse and wagon at the turn of the 20th century. It's now the sixth-largest agricultural industry in Oregon, and our crop covers 31 percent of the market. Oregon Christmas trees can be found across the country and across the world.

I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina for offering this resolution. As we head into consideration of the 2007 Farm Bill, it provides an important reminder that the agriculture upon which many of our communities depend is more than corn and cotton. Our federal farm policy should reflect the diversity of American agriculture and ensure a fair playing field for all of our farmers and ranchers.

Already, Oregon nurseries and vineyards, ranchers, and farmers are leading the way, showing how we can craft winning policies that are good for farmers, the land, the environment, consumers, our water supplies, and wildlife. I look forward to the opportunity to work with my friends on the Agriculture Committee, to build on this good work and take it to the next level, and, in true Oregon tradition, create an opportunity to unite citizens throughout the state.